

THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY

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Mr. R W Murphy
CFR
NY NY 10021

Dear Dick:

Re: War Aims; And after Saddam Hussein, what?

I want to take off from your piece in CSM October, which may have been written a few weeks ago.

I have been hearing many influential and erstwhile sensible people talking gloomily (a few in some exhilaration!) about a Military solution. I doubt not that we might "win", but likely at a cost of more blood than they anticipate; and the long term consequences may be as grave whether that is "ours" or "theirs".

What I've heard no iota of is, what then? How do we enforce a pacification of Iraq (or Libya, or Syria, or Iran, or ...) with respect either to regional aggression and intimidation, or further development of weapons of mass destruction, or both? Will we have a permanent military govt. in Baghdad? If not, who will be installed there? Where can we find deeper roots of peace and stability?

When I saw you a few weeks ago, I expressed as deep a concern as anyone about BW and other weapons developments; and likewise that a negotiated retreat from Kuwait would not be a "satisfactory" resolution. But I have heard no great wisdom about war aims either. I need help in formulating my own ideas on the matter; and believe we're in a sorry state if the likes of me have to be raising such initiatives.

My premises are:

a) a "military victory" that knocked out Saddam Hussein at the cost of extensive civilian casualties in Iraq would place the US in a permanent war with the Arab world. We'd surely see retaliatory terrorism on an immense scale to continue to aggravate that conflict -- and plenty of interested bystanders to fan the embers. The US high profile might be mitigated were the principal ground combat to be on the part of Arab vs. Arab; but that is unlikely. And we have no Arab base for leading Iraq out of its saliency.

b) The multilateral cohesion (the fortuitous convergence of moral and economic claims) is precious, and worth a great deal of restraint on our part. Not that our alliance policy will be bereft of arm-twisting and side deals. It should be founded on, but need not be all a matter of UN resolutions. Europe is as important.

c) We do need to find some way to contain Iraq's development and use of CW, BW, nuclear weapons.

d) It would be desirable to punish Iraq's aggression, get Hussein out of Kuwait, and enforce the defensibility of Saudi Arabia. But we're all agreed the first 2 of these aims don't solve the problem; and are probably not worth a costly war.

e) Sanctions alone probably won't dislodge Hussein; they may provoke him into some further aggression that will invite our military response. (And this may be what Bush is waiting for). I wouldn't underestimate what an "inconvenience" they will be to him. I can't judge how long the coalition will last, nor what steps Hussein may take to fragment it.

f) Our "signalling" to Hussein has been notoriously unreliable. It will be worse if we don't clarify our own policy and aims.

--- It is probably important that Hussein worry (as I am sure he is) that our troops now consolidated in S.A. are a serious threat to him. We probably should continue to rely on them for deterrence against further follies on his part, rather than use them up for aims still so vaguely defined. If we do escalate (and I'm not prepared to say when; but not necessarily delay indefinitely) we should probably use air power primarily to target:

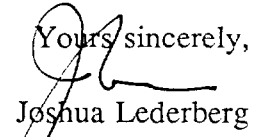
- 1) tightening the blockade, e.g., ports and LOC's. and his military LOC's
- 2) obviously his air defenses
- 3) CW production and stockpiles; and to the extent we can find them, BW and nuclear development.
- 4) Other high value military and military-related industrial targets, when these can be separated from civilian populations.

We should avow (at least to ourselves!) that we going out of our way to separate the regime from the populace (even though the latter is still largely supportive of it). This would be a new use of airpower; in WW-2 strategic bombing had exactly the opposite effect. These "surgical" strikes will not be all that precise; we need some realistic calculation of collateral damage, and include that in targetting. And I trust there will be some amelioration of gratuitous civilian casualties from more focussed targetting. We don't want to leave the Iraqi people and army with nothing more to lose.

Our aim should be "active containment". We probably have little to choose between one regime and another, and should waste little blood on that. I've not been able to find very realistic models of equilibrium after that. Complication: would we be any happier after an Iranian takeover of a weakened Iraq?

Don't underestimate the erosion of the moral base of our intervention in U.S. as well as Europe, if we're nonchalant about civilian casualties.

For the time being, and especially ante a self-clarification of our strategic war aims, I see nothing better than continuing the blockade, perhaps looking for more active ways to punish violators.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg